The NASA Glenn Research Center Macintosh User Group

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Time for another exciting issue of the GRCmug newsletter! And we do have some exciting news: Michael Mills, from Apple Computer, is bringing a G5 to Glenn on September 16, 2003 for another Lunch and Learn (yes, this also means there will be FREE pizza)! The meeting will be held in the RAC (bldg 142), room 185, from noon until 2:00 p.m.

As far as an agenda goes, Mike plans to talk about the G5, though we're not sure yet which one, and Panther, though we're not sure which build! He'll also show iSight/ iChat. If there is anything else you'd like him to discuss, please let one of the officers of the GRCmug know before Mike's visit.

I hope to see most of you at the meeting. Wear your Apple T-shirts and/or hats. Show your true colors!!

I would like to thank everyone who contributed something to this newsletter. I was beginning to worry that interest was waning, but am happy to report my worries were unfounded! I know there are more of you out there just dying to see your name in print in something other than a scientific journal. It's easy: write an article!

I'd like to see more how-to type articles. If you have a favorite software, have put together a stupendous home network, found this great internet link, have created your own software application, why keep all this to yourself? Inquiring minds want to know.....share it.

See you all on the 16th. Till then, happy mac computing!

—Lisa Madden, Editor

Well, the new single processor G5s are shipping. The dual processor G5s should ship before the end of the month. Panther seems almost ready, and IBM announced that beta versions of their fortran compilers are available. It's a good time to be an S&E Mac User.

By now most of you are probably running OS X here on lab. I hope you're enjoying it. I haven't heard a lot of complaining either on the email list or off. Mostly, the biggest issues seem to be the limitations places on non-administration users. Of course, there are the ever-present Office compatibility problems. Why Microsoft can't make the Mac and PC versions of Office able to open documents created on each platform with no issues is a mystery to me. Perhaps in the future it'll change.

This month we get to see a G5 up close and personal at Michael Mills' Lunch and Learn presentation. Come on out and see one yourself. Until we get our Apple store in the area, having Michael come out is about the best way to see new hardware. Perhaps in October, should the new Beachwood store open then, we'll have to arrange a user group road trip.

I have had a few new Mac users ask me for advice on what computer to purchase for home. It makes me very happy to see folks choosing a Mac again. Perhaps we should set up a column in our web page or this newsletter with advice for folks looking at getting a Mac. Anyone want to author it?

Speaking of the web page. I am currently still working on making it publicly available. As of this writing, it is still behind the firewall and only available to you when you're inside the grc domain. If I have gotten all the 501 compliance bugs fixed, we'll be cleared soon for the public launch. Keep watching your emails for further details.

That's all I have for this month. Thanks for reading and keep on enjoying your Macs!

—Melissa McGuire, President

inside view of the new G5 computers

Snood

By Lisa Madden

Okay, I'll admit it. My name is Lisa and I'm addicted to Snood. I need therapy.

It all started at a friend's house several years ago. We had a few hours to kill, so what the heck, she introduced me to this game on her computer. I hate computer games, so thought how bad can this be? I'll humor her and then forget about it. Wrong!

One game and I was hooked. I came home and immediately downloaded the game on my OS 9 machine. I never registered (shame on me) as I kept telling myself this is only a fad, I'll get over it. Soon, yes, sure, very soon….

Now I'm on a mission to infect…er….introduce all of you to this wonderful time sucking game: Snood. Forget about work, forget about getting dinner ready for your family, doing laundry, going out of the house. You don't need to go out, order pizza in, it's one of the main food groups isn't it? Just stay home and play, play, play. You already know that the next game you'll beat it and be the high pooba of Snooddom, or something like that anyway.

Here's how it works: First you have to get on the internet and go to http://www.snood.com. Once on the site, navigate to whichever platform of Snood you desire. Hey, they now have Snood for OS X (and yes, I've finally registered it so am legal…don't send the Snood police after me). They even make Snood for that other platform in case you are so inclined.

The object of this game is to see how many Snoods you can shoot down before the wall comes crashing down to kill you! Sort of reminiscent of the old Space Invaders game, but much much better. There are many levels (child to evil) and different types of games (journey, tournament, etc.) you can play. You can even change how the Snoods look! They have something for everyone, trust me. Heh heh…..

One of the levels even has the Macintosh Apple symbol as one of its configurations. Now, how cool is that?

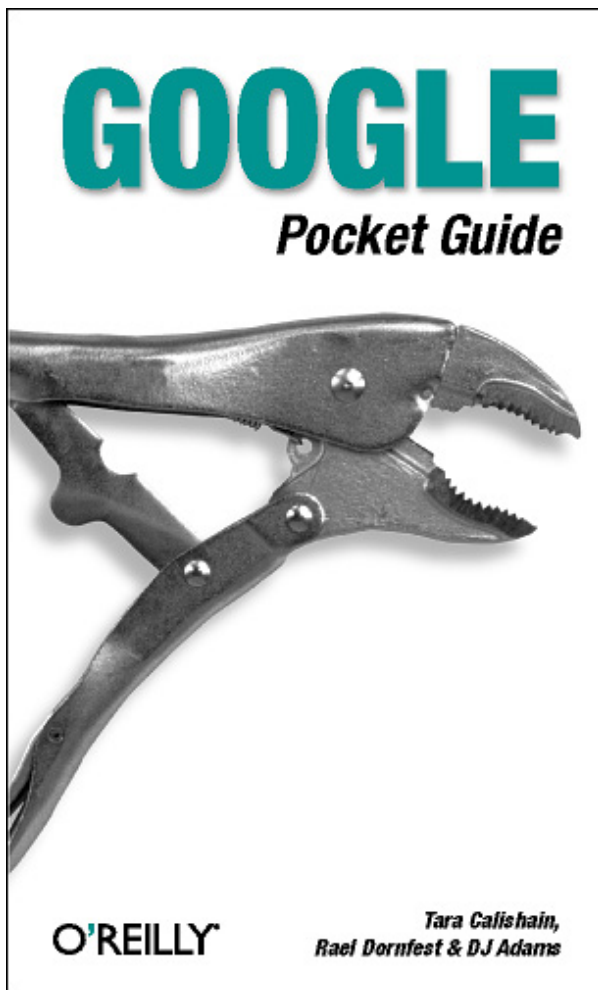The website is full of Snood stuff. One cannot have too much Snood Stuff. Shirts, hats, Stuff……

Don't forget to register your copy of Snood, as that is the only way to get all the levels and other coolness the game has to offer. The cost is minimal, like $15.00. You can afford it. Don't make ME send the Snood police after YOU.

So, what are you waiting for? Go to the site. Download Snood. Start to play. See if you can get up from the computer. Spread the word.

I have to go put the carpal tunnel wrist brace back on now and order some pizza…..

Book Review: Google Pocket Guide

By Melissa McGuire

Google Pocket Guide
By Tara Calishain, Rael Dornfest, DJ Adams
June 2003
Series: Pocket References
0-596-00550-4, Order Number: 5504
140 pages, $9.95 US, $15.95 CA, £6.95 UK
http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/googlepg/index.html

This pocket guide is a good introduction to search engines. If you've used Google quite a bit, or something like it, and are fairly familiar with Boolean algebra, there won't be much here that you don't already know.

Still, it's a great reference for someone new to the internet or to searching the internet. If you've got someone new to computers who doesn't know how to go about finding websites, this book might help them understand what they are doing when they type in keywords to google's search engine.

I was aware that there were different "flavors" of Google but hadn't spent the time looking through the site to find them all. I was familiar with Froogle, a search engine for price comparison online shopping, but was not aware of Groups, Catalogs, Images, and many other google specific searches. There's even a Google search specific to things Macintosh : (http://www.google.com/mac).

I'd recommend this book to newbies or to have as a quick reminder of some of the things that Google can do. It is what it claims to be, a good pocket guide.
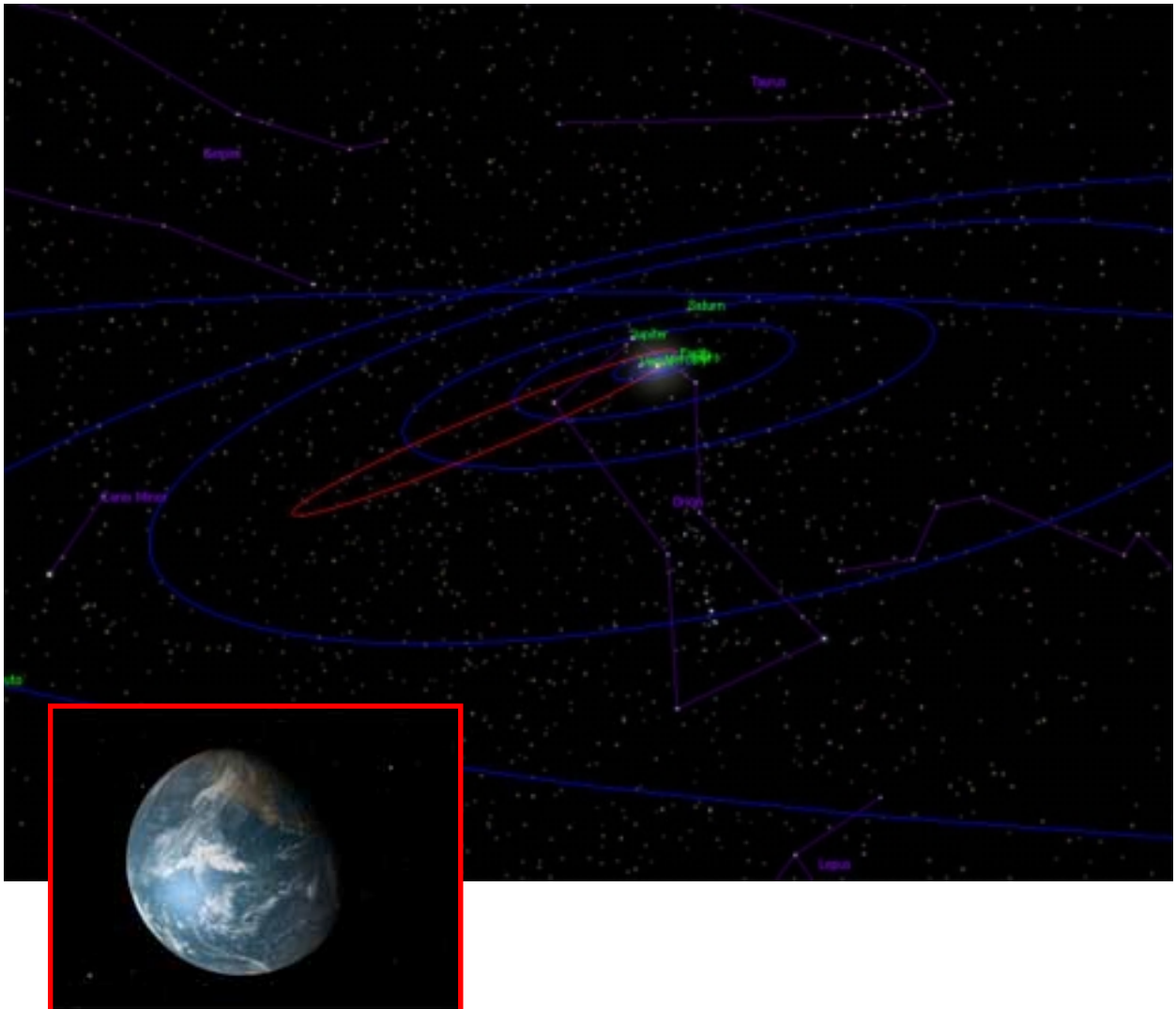
{Disclaimer: The opinions of this review are those of the author alone and not necessarily those of NASA.}

C E L E S T I A

by: Robert Falck <Robert.Falck@grc.nasa.gov>

   A new version of Celestia, an open-source real-time astronomical simulator has been released for OS X. Although the new version, 1.3.0 is officially a preliminary release on OS X, it is an incredible improvement over previous versions. Celestia allows one to navigate throughout the solar system's nine planets and all moons, numerous asteroids, and thousands of stars in the Milky Way. One can watch eclipses and close-approaches as they happen in real time, or view events in the past or future. Celestia also contains a number of spacecraft models. One can track, for instance, Cassini's progress as it makes its way to Saturn in 2004. And because Celestia is designed to be open, the user can add new spacecraft and heavenly bodies to the program. Version 1.3.0 of Celestia can be downloaded at http://sourceforge.net/ projects/celestia/ Also, please take the time to visit http://www.shatters.net/celestia to download some of the add-ons for Celestia and to give feedback to the OS X development team.

Super GameHouse Solitaire Special Edition

.Mac free download

by: Melissa McGuire

I have a .mac account. Kept it when they started charging for them. I had signed up for mine the day Steve Jobs announced the old iTools accounts and I used the email enough to justify the expense to myself.

Now I've tried to get my money's worth by downloading the different software titles free to .mac members. My latest time-waster is Super GameHouse Solitaire. At 2.8 MB, it's not a large download, so doing so at home on my dial up connection wasn't too bad. It has six different versions of Solitaire. I only play the Klondike one, myself. It's addictive. The graphics are nice. Not sure if it has the capability of giving hints, as I have felt too guilty to look into it.

So, if you've got a ,mac account, head on over to http://www.mac.com/ and check out the games available. Log in periodically, or sign up for the automatic .mac emails to find out the latest of what's available.
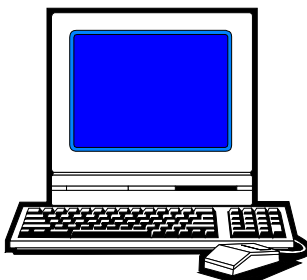
{All opinions expressed in this review are those of the author and not those of NASA.}

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submitted by Melissa McGuire

http://www.maccompanion.com

Just going through my daily emails and came across a new Mac resource site to check out. Eventually it's going to operate as a subscription site as well as free, This site looks to be trying to fill an international nitch, as opposed to one for those of us in the States. Head on over and take a look. Let us know what you think.

http://www.lerc.nasa.gov/
WWW/AdvisoryGroups/MUG/
or
http://GMUG.grc.nasa.gov

Apple supports NASA high school program

by Richard DeLombard <Richard.DeLombard-1@nasa.gov>

Dr. Don Thomas, Cleveland-born astronaut, chats with a DIME team member who expressed an interest in becoming an astronaut. iBook and iMac in foreground. (Yes, the foam packing on the iMac display was left on to facilitate re-packing after just three days' use.)

The Dropping In a Microgravity Environment (DIME) program sponsored by NASA is a competitive science event for high school student teams. Student teams follow a research path similar to NASA researchers in that the teams develop a hypothesis, write an experiment proposal, the 'winning' teams build their proposed microgravity science experiment, and then operate it in the NASA Glenn 2.2 Second Drop Tower. The primary source of data in the drop tower is video observations of experiment phenomena which the student teams should examine after each drop of their experiment.

During their three-day visit to Glenn, the student teams are based in the Ad Building auditorium where they use computers to analyze their data. The first year for DIME (school year 2000/01), video data was recorded on video tape and transferred to digital files on a computer, just as the drop tower researchers use. To streamline the process for the student teams with their limited time at Glenn, video data in the succeeding years have been recorded using a Mac iBook computer, Dazzle media converter. and Apple's iMovie software.

Using the iMovie software allows the teams to immediately review the data after the drop operations. The 2.2 seconds of video data during the free fall in the drop tower was exported to a QuickTime movie and subsequently to individual frames as JPEG files. These movie and graphic files were then transferred to CD-R disk by the built-in iBook CD-RW drive.

To analyze these video files, watch the Quicktime movie, create a PowerPoint presentation about their experimental research, and store their data and files to take home with them the teams needed access to computers with CD-RW drives. Unfortunately, the computers available from ODIN (neither PC or Mac) for temporary use did not have CD-RW drives.

Michael Mills (Apple rep for government accounts) was asked if four QuickTimePro licenses could be 'borrowed' for several days use by the student teams but the request was declined - but followed immediately by a question of "How many computers do you need?" Michael then offered for Apple to loan eight computers for the four DIME teams during their stay at Glenn. So, four iBooks and four iMacs were provided in late-April 2003 for the DIME teams to accomplish their data analysis and PowerPoint presentation work.

The iBooks and iMacs came with MS Office installed along with other standard software. The iMacs had VirtualPC installed which was used to run a Glenn-developed video analysis application written for Windows. The Glenn DIME staff also installed a Mac freeware application called Free Ruler to enable video data analysis.

The computers came from Apple's contractor which supplies 'loaners' and were packaged as if they were brand-new off-the-shelf.   At the end of the week, the computers were packaged up and shipped back to the contractor.

DIME Web Site: http://microgravity.grc.nasa.gov/DIME.html

DIME student team from Troy, Michigan use the iMac and iBook for video data analysis for their experiment. Experiment apparatus is in foreground.

The MUG Store

From iPods to iBooks, iMacs to the latest Power Mac G5s, the MUG Store has you covered with a great selection of new and refurbished Mac equipment. Right now you can buy an eMac for as little as $688 (US), then add 256 MB of memory for $30 (US) with the No Stinkin' Rebate MUG Store RAM offer. Remember that your user group gets one percent back toward anything the MUG Store sells every time a member orders from the MUG Store.

http://www.applemugstore.com

Password schedule:
7/1/2003- 9/30/2003 User ID: apple / Password: music

This offer is available to members of U.S. user groups.

Grip-It Strips

Grip~it Strips are a set of high-tech slip resistant textured strips that attach to the top and bottom of your laptop to provide an incredible better grip.

Insurance studies show 3,800+ laptops a day are damaged from handling accidents, and with increased handling in hotspots and airport security there is added risk that your laptop will be dropped.

Grip~it Strips provide the BEST protection against dropping the most expensive item you carry around, your laptop.

Exclusive MUG offer: one free pack of Grip~it Strips (a $6.65 (US) value) with purchase of 3 packs for $19.95 (US).

To order, go to http://www.gripitstrips.com and use Referral code: "**MUG MEMBER**", then specify 4 packages by color and design.

*This worldwide offer expires December 31, 2003. *For MUG Members ONLY**

Nifty Mac Links

BOOM 1.4.3 (Shareware - 08/30/2003)
Arcade game: Bomberman meets Doom
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/719

TicTacToe 2.0.2 (Freeware - 08/30/2003)
Simple game, playable in a few seconds
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/17694

HTML-Optimizer 7.7 (Shareware - 08/30/2003)
Optimize web page html & script code
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/9778

StyleMaster 2.2.1 (Shareware - 08/30/2003)
HTML cascading style sheet editor
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/4302

Web Site Maestro 2.7 (Shareware - 08/30/2003)
Check, optimize, then upload Web pages
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/14665

HTML-Optimizer Pro 2.8 (Shareware - 08/30/2003)
Check/optimize Web page HTML & script code
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/16726

MRJ Adapter 1.0.1 (Freeware - 08/28/2003)
Java API integrates with Mac OS specific functionality
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/20705

piPop 2.1.1 (Shareware - 08/28/2003)
Pop-up hierarchical file navigation & launcher app
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/17209

JewelCaseIllustrator 2.1.1 (Shareware - 08/28/2003)
Creates CD labels, tray liners & booklets
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/14792

iVisit 2.9b12 (Beta - 08/28/2003)
Multi-party Internet video-audio-text conferencing
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/2243

Regress+ 2.5.1 (Freeware - 08/31/2003)
Mathematical modeling of equations and distributions
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/3798

pgSQL4RB 1.0b6 (Beta - 08/31/2003)
PostgreSQL classes for REALbasic
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/20672

Alarm Clock Pro 6.2.8 (Shareware - 08/31/2003)
MP3 alarm clock; iTunes & net streaming
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/13639

TargetDate 0.20a (Freeware - 08/31/2003)
Pregnancy tracker
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/20753

Mergemill 2.5 (Shareware - 08/31/2003)
Web database publishing, graphics processing & data formatting tool
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/12938

L'Astrologue 5.1 (Shareware - 08/31/2003)
Astrology software to compute, draw & interpret natal charts
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/9075

sixtyforce 0.7.0b3 (Beta - 08/31/2003)
Nintendo 64 console emulator
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/2525

Easy Numbering 1.0 (Shareware - 09/01/2003)
Numbers forms, tickets, receipts... for printers
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/19080

iUnit 2.4.0 (Shareware - 09/01/2003)
Conversions for 600+ measurement units & world currencies
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/8238

Colibricks 1.5.2 (Shareware - 09/01/2003)
Brick game with realistic physics and rotated bricks
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/10006

FontViewer 1.5.4 (Shareware - 09/01/2003)
Simple font viewing tool, slideshow previews & more
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/8295

DupliMizer 2.4.4 (Shareware - 09/01/2003)
AppleScript to duplicate & optimize an entire web site
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/mac/7700

Made with Macintosh